Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

LEAFLET NO. 1

1
Ag84L
Cop. 3

LIBRARY
RECEIVED
APR 23 1939
U. S. Department of Agriculture

Ways to SAVE YOUNG LIVESTOCK

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Issued May 1927 Slightly revised February 1939

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. - - - - - Price 5 cents

WAYS TO SAVE YOUNG LIVESTOCK

By MAURICE C. HALL, *Chief, Zoological Division, Bureau of Animal Industry*[1]

The prevention of stunted growth and death losses among young livestock helps to make stock raising a more successful and profitable enterprise.

Before birth the young animal is fairly well protected from shock, injury, and infection. It has practically a uniform temperature, and under normal conditions has an adequate and suitable food supply. But once launched into the world it is surrounded with dangers—infectious organisms; extremes of temperature with wind, rain, snow, and hail; the possibilities of inadequate or improper foods; underfeeding or overfeeding; and the presence of actual poisons of various sorts. The threat against an animal's life is greatest at birth or shortly afterwards.

Breed From Good, Healthy Stock

Breeding from good stock is desirable and fundamental. Yet the tremendous losses among young livestock are due only to a very limited extent to faulty breeding. Purebred animals generally receive better care than ordinary stock because they are more valuable, and they are usually the property of the more skillful stockmen. But equally good care should be extended to young animals in general, regardless of whether they are purebred. Livestock owners must drop any attitude they may have of fatalism and indifference toward the deaths of young animals, and challenge every death to show cause why it occurred.

Chief Causes of Early Deaths in Livestock

The causes of most early deaths in livestock fall into two general classes:

1. Those capable of considerable reduction, chiefly through eradication of disease among the mature stock, proper hygiene, sanitary isolation, and medical treatment. In this class are tuberculosis, acute respiratory diseases, certain acute contagious diseases, and some diseases caused by animal parasites.

2. Those capable of very great reduction through proper feeding, care, and sanitation, such as acute digestive diseases, goiter troubles, prematurity (if not extreme), and many forms of animal parasitism.

Besides the two important classes mentioned there are some other conditions, such as malformation, extreme feebleness or extreme prematurity, and certain accidents during birth. These conditions are little influenced by treatment, but represent a very small proportion of total loss.

[1] Resigned April 1936.

119086°—39

Sanitation System Saves Young Pigs

In the case of swine, the system worked out for saving the lives of young pigs is simple in practice, and many farmers are raising a proportion of pigs farrowed far above the average. The farrowing pen

FIG. 1.—The wrong way. Pigs are overcrowded, too many sizes are mixed together, and conditions favor the spread of pig ailments

should be thoroughly cleaned and scrubbed to remove all worm eggs that may be present. The roundworm of swine is a parasite that has caused very heavy losses. The sow should then be thoroughly cleaned up, paying special attention to the udder to remove all worm

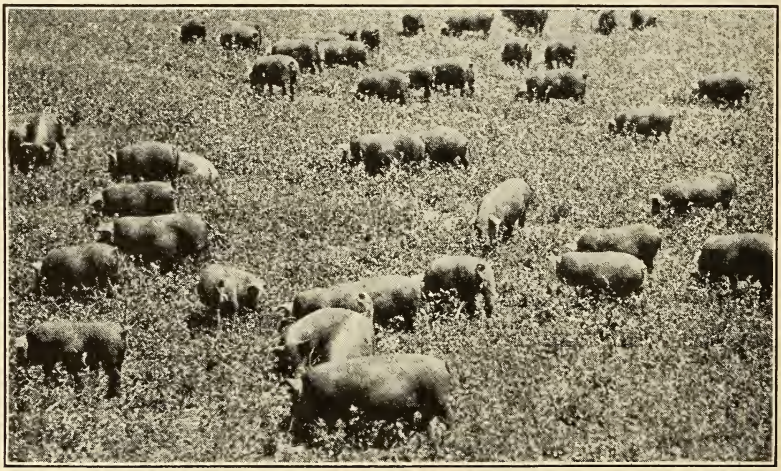

FIG. 2.—The right way, recommended by swine specialists as a part of the successful system of swine sanitation

eggs. Within 10 days after farrowing the sow and pigs are removed to a field sown to forage crops and not pastured to swine since it was sown. The pigs are provided with a good supply of water and shade and kept in this field for at least four months, after which time they

are reasonably safe from severe or injurious worm infestation. Experience shows that these measures also help to prevent bullnose, mange, dietary deficiencies, cholera, and other ailments to a large extent, as might be expected from cleanliness, and the separation of young animals from groups of older animals and their infected surroundings. Safe and adequate food and water supplies and the necessary shelter and shade also contribute to thriftiness and rapid growth.

Practical Helps in Grazing Sheep and Lambs

The case of grazing animals presents certain special difficulties. They habitually soil their "table" with manure, insuring the prompt return to the body of the bacteria, worm eggs and larvae and other infectious agents passed in the manure. With sheep, experiments

FIG. 3.—A New England farmer, cooperating with the United States Department of Agriculture, sent this picture. The sheep are purebred and the persons holding them are all his children, likewise interested in improved stock. The picture shows the result of good breeding and care

have shown that rotation of pastures or of different kinds of stock on the same pasture is an aid in the control of stomach worms, but it is far from being the effective control measure hoped for. Control of parasite diseases would go a long way toward solving the problem of losses among lambs. So far as sanitation is concerned, lambs should be given special preference in the matter of pasture. They should be placed on fairly dry hillsides—not on bottom lands—away from wethers and all older sheep except the mothers, wherever possible, and the mothers should be treated for worms.

Build Up Vitality in Calves

The problem of calves is more complicated. In addition to parasites, they are subject to tuberculosis, bacterial diseases of the digestive tract, and other diseases. Eradication of disease among the mature stock and control of parasites, however, give an animal more vitality and more resistance to ailments that may arise.

Protecting Other Young Stock

In the case of horses the fact that in this country they are usually handled in large numbers only in parts of the West where conditions are not so favorable for parasites as they are in the Middle West, South, and East may simplify the control of mortality among colts. With only a few horses on a farm, pasture rotation, safe quarters for colts, and similar control measures are feasible. Specific measures for the control of infectious joint disease and related conditions will be necessary.

With dogs the problem of parasite control is a serious one with certain complications which have only recently been ascertained. For

FIG. 4.—A good hatch is just the beginning of a profitable flock. How many will be raised? Remember, all losses are due to causes which are largely preventable

one thing it is now known that prenatal infection with ascarids may occur and it seems reasonably likely at present that such infection may prove to be of rather common occurrence. To prevent this will involve the treatment of the bitch before breeding and the provision of sanitary surroundings in the yards and kennels.

Sanitation in the houses and runs aids in the control of certain diseases among poultry. As chicks and turkey poults are highly susceptible to gapeworm infestation, and since older turkeys and guinea fowls serve as carriers of gapeworms, losses from gapes may be greatly reduced by raising each kind of bird separately. More detailed information on the care of young animals may be obtained on application to the department.

SUMMARY

Put young animals by themselves or with the mothers, away from older animals. Give them the safest, dry, hillside pastures, not low wet ones. Do not overstock. If animals are unthrifty, it is probably due to poor breeding, poor feeding, or parasites. Keep chicks and turkey poults away from old turkeys and guinea fowls. Use the swine-sanitation system.

○

N0016a